Some background. I was with AT&T local services from 1996 to mid-1998 when I retired. I wrote the provisioning documents for LNP and was a member of the joint operator LNP trial in Illinois.

The reluctance to provide number portability has always been driven by: 1) revenue loss - the expectation that any pareticular carrier will lose more customers than they get, 2) cost for the data bases and ongoing provisioning is large, and 3) the majority of the customers do not care about it. To addresss the issues: 1) this is (was) not supported by any data. Actually, the churn is relatively neutral. The costs to the companies are due to the incentives to switch providers, the costs associated with retention promotions, and the lowering of rates due to competition. 2) The initial costs for the data bases were high but the fees associated with LNP were sufficient to offset them IF they entered into a joint non-competitive architecture such as is in place for 8YY numbers. The cost to initiate service orders for switching providers is vastly inflated. The reluctance of the incumbents to embrace a modern provisioning technology that can speak with the OSSs of their competitors keeps this inflated cost viable if not specious. Also, unlike wireline offices that use V&H coordinates to aggregate customer by rate centers, wireless billing is generally postalized,
or, if rated, it is done so a much broader geographic scale. Local calling ares for wireless encompass, generally, multiple NPAs let
let alone rate centers. 3) Customers do not make a big issue of this because they have been continually told it is virtually
impossible and that it would add to their cost of service if some day provided. Most of the customers I speak with would love to have this option if it were available but, sadly, do not believe it is ever going to happen.

The providers are winning this battle on the publicity front but I do not believe they can make a true business case for their reluctance. Several things should happen to enable this: 1) Providers need to concentrate on retention rather than winbacks. OF
course the best way to do this is to stay competitive and provide adequate/good service. 2) Local service providers need to embrace postalized billing as oppposed to rate center billing. AS they enter the LD markets this can only add to their revenue rather than detract from it. Unfortunately they are virtually incabable of thinking out of the box on most issues and spend more effort and money to keep the status quo than they could otherwise put to use in implementing changes that would eventually save them considerable expense. 3) Imlement mandatory universal 10 (not 11) digit dialing. The concept of 1+ is now obsolete. Its original function was to call in AMA bilers for non-measured calls. THis is an obsolete vestige of an earlier architecture that is no longer reauired. Once 10 digit is implemented on wireline, as it is on most wireless calls, the difference between them will blur and eventually will come acceptance. With this acceptance, the concept of true geographic portability, as opposed to the rate center iteration now offered for wireline, will become far easier to implemet for both and the public, with the usual recalcitrants that object to anything, will embrace it heartily. Of couse, it the wheels of progress turn as they have for deregulatrion, by the time this issue is resolved, we will have advanced beyond wireline and wireless to true IP end points and this entire exercise will have been rendered moot.

Oh well - thanks for listening